

Bongo's in fast lane with Disney on his back

By Michael London
The Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD — Four months after his dramatic exit from Paramount Pictures, Walt Disney Productions Chairman Michael Eisner finally spoke out this week on the question of Disney's identity for the future.

The answer was: "Bongo."

Bongo the circus bear, that is, hero of a 1930 Sinclair Lewis short story and Disney's 1947 animated feature "Fun and Fancy Free." Eisner likened Bongo's journey from circus to forest with Disney's plans for going up against the big bad wolves of Hollywood.

Eisner's speech, before the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, was attended by many of the biggest and baddest wolves from

the TV and film industries. As Eisner sarcastically noted, the event might have gone down as the most prestigious assemblage in entertainment history were it not for the conspicuous absence of executives from his former home, Paramount.

But back to the bear facts.

Eisner told how "smart and lively" Bongo (read: Disney) felt trapped in the circus (Disney's Burbank-based animation paradise) and escaped to the forest (Hollywood). Bongo quickly found that he was wasn't prepared for the rain and cold and couldn't defend himself against Lumpjaw, the meanest old bear in the forest.

Bongo being Bongo, he eventually triumphs over Lumpjaw, taps the sweetest honey tree in the forest, and lives happily ever after. End of fable, time for the moral.

Disney "can no longer be content alone in Burbank (Calif.), caged by its previous success," Eisner said. "We must climb over the Santa Monica mountains to Century City."

Bongo, he said, must "go to lunch with Lew Erlicht, breakfast with Brandon Tartikoff and dinner with Bud Grant. Bongo must ally himself with Lew Wasserman, Barry Diller and Bob Daly to protect his woods against a Tony Thomopoulos who wants a bigger share of the honey."

"Frankly," Eisner concluded, "Bongo must go Hollywood."

(For non-canine readers, Erlicht and Thomopoulos are top dogs at ABC, Tartikoff at NBC and Grant at CBS. Wasserman, Diller and Daly run MCA Inc., 20th Century Fox and Warner Bros., respectively. All seven were present.)

Eisner's speech has been received as both inspired allegory and metaphor run amok.

...

Barbra Streisand is headed to the big screen for the first time since "Yentl," but in a small way.

Negotiations are almost concluded for a national theatrical run of Streisand's "Emotion" video from her recent album of the same name. The 5 1-2-minute video could be playing in several hundred theaters by mid-February.

Other videos have played theaters, but none with a cast like this one. Streisand plays a frustrated wife; Roger Daltrey plays her husband and Mikhail Baryshnikov appears as one of her fantasy lovers. Richard Baskin, Streisand's frequent companion of late, directed.

DANCE NOTES

Fund-raiser auction of luxury items and dance to benefit Atlanta Ballet

By Helen Smith
Staff Writer

Do you like to dance? You can benefit Dance — the Atlanta Ballet in particular — by dancing the night away at the first annual Atlanta Ballet fund-raising auction and dance Saturday at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Sponsored by the Atlanta Ballet Associates, the event will include the auctioning of \$75,000 worth of luxurious prizes — including furs, oil portraits and nights on the town. Under the leadership of Kathy Morgan, chairman of the auction committee, the associates have received donated prizes from more than 60 Atlanta merchants and businesses.

After the auction, which begins at 8 p.m., there will be dancing to the big-band sounds of Sentimental Journey Orchestra, a cash bar and elaborate hors d'oeuvres.

The Atlanta Ballet, which is not a member of the Woodruff Arts

Center, is the largest independent arts group in Georgia, and one of the oldest. It was founded in 1929 by Dorothy Alexander, who remains active as an adviser to the board.

Its budget this year is \$2.6 million, about 14 percent of which is raised acquired through fund-raising efforts such as the auction, the Ballet Ball during fall and International Night during late spring. The Ballet Associates, a division of the Atlanta Ballet Society, hopes to raise \$15,000 on its first auction night.

Ticket prices for the auction/dance (black tie is optional) are \$25 for Atlanta Ballet Society members; \$35 for non-Society members (includes a year's membership in the Society); \$50 patron tickets (includes preferred seating) and \$100 gold sponsor tickets (includes preferred seating and a private-viewing cocktail party from 7 to 8 p.m.). Reserved tables for 10 patrons are available for \$500. For reservations, call Judi Rogers at 873-5811.

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NORTHLAKE 2
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1:30 4:15 7:00 9:45
GENERAL CINEMA
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"FALLING IN LOVE" (PG-13) (PARA) (106) 7:40 9:40

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"FALLING IN LOVE" (PG-13) (PARA) (106) 7:40 9:40

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